

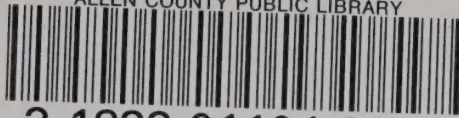




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# BRIDES OF THE OPEN RANGE

1875-1887

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS



The Wyoming Society  
of the  
Colonial Dames of America

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VOL. II - 1962



GENEALOGY COLLECTION



## FOREWORD



One of the objects of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America is to collect and preserve manuscripts connected with the early history of our country.

In the year of 1935 the Colonial Dames in Wyoming announced a state-wide contest on "The Biography of a Pioneer." Actual names, dates and events were required because the purpose of the contest was to obtain original records of historical events of the state. One stipulation was that all manuscripts be composed of original material not previously published. All residents of Wyoming were eligible to compete.

The Society of Colonial Dames in Wyoming takes pride in presenting Volume II from the early prize winners.



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COLONIAL DAMES IN WYOMING



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## BIOGRAPHY OF A PIONEER



Immediately after a wedding ceremony, in 1875, which took place in Philadelphia, uniting Sarah Donnelly and Michael Mullen, man and wife, the couple left for the mining fields of Central City, Colorado. There they lived until a small-pox scare, with death holding the winning cards, drove them to Wyoming. The family, now consisting of the father, mother and four small children lived in Cheyenne, until about the middle of September. Then early one morning Mike Mullen hitched his team of horses to a covered wagon containing all his worldly goods, lifted his four small children into their places, then he tenderly helped his brave young pioneer wife and her three weeks old babe up on the seat beside him and together they drove northward to settle on their homestead, filed on by Mike some months previously. It took them about a week to make the trip from Cheyenne to their homestead on the Laramie River.

It was a typical Wyoming fall, with the days clear and hot and the nights rather cool. Those long days riding in the wagon were extremely wearisome. Hour after hour the landscape was the same, rolling prairies of brown grass stretched away to the north and east for miles, in fact as far as the eye could see. On the horizon of the west the Rocky Mountains rested and pleased the eye with their rugged beauty. When at evening the sun sank down in the western sky with its wonderful glory of colorful sunsets bringing with it promise of rest and quiet around the campfire, then sleep and rest under the twinkling star studded dome.

From Cheyenne to the Laramie River there was no town. A few supplies were kept at a place called Kelly Station near the place that is now the situation of the town of Chugwater. This ranch was run by a man called High Kelly. A woman living at this place came out and talked to Mrs. Mullen and gave the four children some gingerbread. She urged them to stop with true western hospitality but they were anxious to reach their destination before the nights would get too cold, since each night grew colder and colder.

Their journey ended, they stayed with John Mullen a brother of Mike, who was also living on the Laramie River,



until their own log cabin was built. This log cabin was their home for years to come and it is still standing on the ranch, now owned by one of the sons of Mike Mullen, who as a little boy made that memorable trip in the covered wagon.

Now came busy days for all the family except the babies. The two older boys carried little cottonwood trees and pails of water and set out a great many trees for their dad; this helped their father win a stone and timber claim. And it was in this way the boys earned their first money; they planted cottonwood trees for their uncle John. In those days a man could only file on a 160 acre homestead site and then to increase his land he must file on a stone and timber claim and on desert claims.

The trees growing along the Laramie River fifty years ago were so scarce that they were landmarks. The few trees they did have were all cottonwoods, boxelders, and willows mostly there might have been some other kinds but they were few and far between.

With the coming of the first spring the family was to be found busy planting a garden, some potatoes, and a small patch of corn. That spring also found this city bred young woman busy setting hens and raising chickens. Wonderful and abundant crops were raised on this virgin soil. Of course there was discouragement and lean years but the pioneers never thought of quitting.

The first Christmas was a real test of the pioneer mother, as this joyous feast approached she thought of the expensive toys Santa Claus used to leave to her little ones when she lived in the little mining town of Colorado. It was clearly impossible here with Cheyenne, the nearest town, ninety miles away and money so scarce that it could be only spared for the necessities. But a mother cannot see her little ones disappointed at Christmas time so after they were in bed she baked gingerbread men and other fancy cookies. She made rag dolls and Mike made tops and other toys for the boys. That Christmas was as merry as any one they ever had.

School was a real problem to the pioneers of Wyoming. Money was scarce and the people were so scattered that each school was attended by only one or two families. The school districts never could afford to pay a teacher for more than three or four months per year. Yet the healthful life led by



these school children kept their minds keen and clear and school was interesting to such a degree that what they learned was clearly grasped and kept by a retentive memory. In fact the three or four months schooling compared most favorably with the much longer term of the city child.

Most of the ranch men's wives had been school teachers, lured to this new western country by the pioneer spirit. Mrs. Osgood Johnson and Mrs. Belle Lucas were among the teachers in this part of Wyoming who could have easily been the heroine for stories like "The Virginian."

Miss Mary Maloney, also one of the teachers of that period, later became the first County Superintendent of Platte County.

I think Wyoming owes much of its integrity, culture and honor to its school teacher mothers.

For years there were very few neighbors and these were so many miles away that visiting was extremely rare but the hospitality of the old West was one of the most charming chivalric features of this state. No stranger was ever permitted to continue on his journey without first partaking of rest and food and the cheer of the fireside.

In the early years almost the only form of amusement was the infrequent dances given at the distant homes. Then all the family bundled up and piling the wagon with hay for the children's seats they all drove long distances to the dance; when they had these dances they were enjoyed by everyone big and small and these dances usually lasted until daylight. Then after having breakfasted, they hitched up the horses and drove home.

Twice a year the men would band together and drive their wagons to Cheyenne for groceries. To forget a necessary article from the store in those days would be a calamity. Each housewife made out a list of necessary food, medicine and clothing sufficient to last for many months.

Indians were not very numerous, but occasionally a small band would roam through the country. One morning a brave and his squaw came up to Patsy Mullen, one of Michael's older sons, where he was working and grunted out some request. Patsy could not understand what they wanted so



they went on to the log cabin where Mrs. Mullen offered them bread, meat, sugar, and various kinds of food, but apparently food was not what they wanted because they finally left in disgust. They probably wanted tobacco or maybe fire water.

In the year 1891 the Union Pacific built the railroad to Wheatland. Previous to this the few settlers got their mail at Uva where it was carried by stage coach.

During these years the Wyoming Development Company was building the reservoirs and canals and ditches. Mike Mullen worked for them and left his wife and older sons to care for the ranch. The work of building up the ranch was slow but sure. Every fall there was a sale of mavericks. The calves bought at this sale was the small beginning of the herds of Mullen and most of his rancher neighbors.

The summer of 1898 brought the first great sorrow to the Mullen family. Joe Mullen, then a lad of fourteen, suddenly became very ill and almost before anyone realized it he died. There were no undertakers in the country. It was impossible to wait for a casket to be ordered and brought from Cheyenne, but defeat was never admitted by the pioneers of any age or any land. John Wilkinson, a near neighbor, before coming to Wyoming had been a cabinet maker in Philadelphia. Luckily he brought all his tools with him. On the day that Joe Mullen died he planed and steamed cottonwood boards and fashioned them into a casket. He worked throughout the night and when morning came a beautiful casket, lined with soft shirring and trimmed neatly outside, was finished. They took Joe to Cheyenne for burial since there was no cemetery any nearer.

A few years later a small daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ned Yates was bitten by a rattlesnake and she is buried in a little plot of ground fenced off by a picket fence where the people thought a cemetery might be established later but such was not the case.

Praise and credit is justly due to the pioneer men for their bravery, but no greater courage than that exhibited by pioneer mothers in a sparsely populated country. Very often no doctor was within calling distance and it became the job of the women to diagnose and treat the sick with whatever remedies were at hand.



Three children were born in the log cabin with no doctor in attendance, nor any to be found. Neighbors came and did what they could but with God's goodness and the bravery of the old-timers all went well.

Finally, old Doc Rigdon as he has been affectionately called for years, and who was both doctor and dentist making his long trips on horseback. Doctor Rigdon is still living in Wheatland but he is getting pretty old now.

When the Wyoming Development Company finally got their project far enough along to sell plots of farm land with a promise of irrigation water the Union Pacific brought in several bands of settlers. These disembarked from the train at Lookout, a few miles south of the depot at Wheatland. Here they were met by several drivers of surreys, top buggies and other vehicles such as mountain wagons, from here they were driven on a sight seeing tour through the country. One of the famous places shown was the wonderful alfalfa field on Bill Ayers' farm. The alfalfa was a heavy stand and higher than a man's waist.

The ranch people, the earliest settlers, were delighted to see the farmers come in. It meant more sociable times, more doctors, more dentists, and longer and better school terms.

Among the earliest settlers to farm near the Mullen family was the Coll Morrison Family, Mrs. Coll Morrison helped to extinguish the first fire that broke out in Wheatland and now she has the proud and just title of being Wheatland's first fireman. Patsy and Henry Mullen both worked for Coll Morrison. In the year 1892 Coll got a contract to carry the mail two days a week from Wheatland to the Dunc Grant ranch and the Radical ranch.

Those days Wyoming was decidedly a dry state. It seldom rained during the summer months but when it did, it found everyone unprepared for it and consequently it poured. One day Henry Mullen who was carrying the mail for Morrison got caught in a rain storm. It rained so hard that his horse had to swim the Sybille and by the time that Henry reached Wheatland the mail inside the sack was soaked and Coll Morrison was fined one hundred dollars for letting the mail get wet.

The train did not stop at Wheatland unless a passenger wished to alight or it was flagged, but it slowed down to permit the mail sack to be thrown into the baggage car. One evening



Patsy was in town and he wanted to try his hand at throwing the mail sack so Henry gave it to him and told him that he must throw it pretty hard, so at the right time, Patsy threw the mail sack with such force that it hit the red hot stove in the baggage car and drove the stove on out through the opposite door on to the prairie. That was one time the train stopped without being flagged.

Prior to the time of the Union Pacific coming to Wheatland the land was great grass land and in these years it was truly the age of the cowboy. Horses were the only means of transportation. After the big fall roundup the cattle to be shipped to market from this southeastern section of Wyoming had to be driven to Pine Bluffs where they were loaded on the freight trains.

The government had an experimental farm on what is now the Fay place. Henry Mullen worked there in 1892. They raised many different kinds of vegetables and even peanuts. Their experiments proved that the Wheatland Flats was a good farming country. From this time on development of the Wheatland Flats continued rapidly.

One of the first business houses erected in Wheatland was Dad Miller's Mercantile store, now owned by McCracken at the present. Dad Miller, as everyone called him, was the ideal business man for a small town. He knew everyone personally. He was strictly honest and fair in his trade with everyone and would always find a market for home supplies. He was liked and respected by all.

The Wheatland community, although peaceful and law abiding, was not without its tragedy. John Morrisey, a powerful man who had at one time been a freighter, or bull whacker as they were familiarly called had started a little ranch and was batching out there. He had a nice little herd of cattle and it was rumored that he had money somewhere on the place. He was rather peculiar and not friendly with many people but he always liked Henry Mullen. One day Henry and Patsy came home and told their dad that Morrisey's cattle had been in the Mullen field for the last few days. Fearing that the old man might be sick, for he never was one to trespass, Mike sent his sons to see. They found the old man dead in his corrall. Some men had been there and claimed that the old man was killed and his nose bitten off by his stallion but when a jury was called and a thorough examina-



tion of the case was made it was decided that it was clearly a case of murder. The old man's nose had been pinched off with a pair of pincers which were found with blood on them and the place had been thoroughly ransacked. The murderer was never found. The jury thought that the old man had been tortured to try to make him reveal the hiding place of his money.

As is usual the case in a new country, this section of Wyoming was settled by people from all sorts of previous occupations, seeking an independent life and those willing to work and save won that independence. Dick Turpin was a freighter or bull whacker before he established his ranch on Cottonwood. George and Fergie Mitchell came from Scotland and bought a ranch on the North Laramie. Ned Yates was a cowboy from Texas who married a girl from Germany who was truly a pioneer since she came here alone and was working at the H ranch before the VR company owned it. Mrs. Yates was among the first white women to live in this part of Wyoming. The Yates established their ranch on the Laramie River.

Pat Daly came from Ireland and married Emma Sutherland who was born on the ranch where they still live. The old Daly ranch is near Fort Laramie. There is a burial ground on it. Members of the Daly family, a few old scouts and a few Indians are buried there.

Mrs. Michael Mullen is still living in Wheatland, a gentle old lady, not far from her ninetieth birthday, whose chief delight is to relate stories of the early days.

Several of the other old timers are still living but each year sees this brave honest band growing smaller as one by one they make their last journey to the ideal country beyond. With their passing the country is losing much of its candor and honesty and the unlocked door of the old west will become a beautiful but lost tradition.

Written by Mrs. P. J. Mullen  
Wheatland, Wyoming—1935-36







## PIONEER



Mrs. Theresa Jenkins, formerly Theresa Parkinson was born on May 1, 1855, at Fayette, Lafayette County, in Wisconsin. She finished her education at the State University in Madison, Wisconsin, and while there she met James F. Jenkins. After she had finished at the University, Theresa Parkinson taught there, and by a strange coincidence Mr. Jenkins was also a teacher there. These two became very good friends. In August 1876, James F. Jenkins came to Wyoming after having secured the promise of the hand of Theresa Parkinson. Through his brother, John J. Jenkins, he secured a position as a clerk in the Commissary Department at Camp Carlin. He worked there for several years, and later bought a grocery store.

Camp Carlin was just southeast of where the present Fort F. E. Warren is. Fort Warren was formerly known as Fort D. A. Russell. Camp Carlin was at that time the last outpost for the outfitting of ox teams and soldiers to the Northwest and the Black Hills.

In 1877, when Mr. Jenkins was planning to return to Madison, Wisconsin, to claim his bride, an Indian uprising interfered with his plans and Mr. Jenkins found it impossible to make the trip east. However, nothing daunted his fiancée. She faced the situation with true womanly courage. She would go to her lover!

Mrs. Jenkins said:

"I left Madison at midnight and was on the train three days and three nights reaching Cheyenne, I arrived here December 20, 1877, and was married that same day."

Mrs. Jenkins could always see the humorous side of life, and while I was talking to her one day she told me a little story about some prominent people who live in Cheyenne at the present time. Mrs. Jenkins said:

"During our early married life there were very few people here and every one was friendly, and all neighborly. A wedding between some prominent Catholic people was to take place in the Catholic Church, then located on the corner of



Nineteenth Street and Carey Avenue. Carey Avenue was then Ferguson Street. It was a cold, snowy day, and the wedding party was to arrive in a coach from Camp Carlin. A Mr. Sullivan was caretaker at the church and was to give the signal to the organist to start the wedding march. Suddenly, a carriage approached and the signal was given, the organ pealed forth and everyone got in readiness to proceed with the ceremony. It turned out to be some guests arriving. A second time a carriage approached, the signal was given again and the organ roared forth. A third time the same thing happened. The Priest was in readiness and again it was a false alarm. Then, quietly and without any commotion the wedding party arrived. Mr. Sullivan hurried forward to give the signal and in his mad haste tripped over the poker set convenient to the large heating stove in the middle of the room and fell headlong. By this time, it was hard for anyone to keep a straight face, but the wedding went on regardless and the parties involved lived to be wonderfully fine citizens and prominent in many activities."

Mr. Jenkins in later years was the Justice of Peace and then he kept a shoe store until his death. When he first came here, he said that there were only fifteen trees in the whole town, of about forty seven houses. There were, in those days as many saloons as houses. His interest was centered on trees. He was behind the movement to lay out a City Park, and he often carried water to keep the trees growing there. He died January 31, 1928, six weeks after he and his wife had celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Mrs. Jenkins became interested in the Presbyterian Church, which was first supported as a Mission. In later years, the first Presbyterian Church was built on the corner of Eighteenth Street and Carey Avenue. In 1924, a new one was built on the corner of Twenty-Second Street and Carey Avenue.

Early in her life in Wyoming, while it was still a territory, Mrs. Jenkins became interested in the educational system and advanced the progressive measure of building and equipping rural schools.

Mrs. Jenkins said:

"During the early school days, there were no schools in the eastern part of town, and all the children were compelled

to go to the central school, now the site of the McCormick Junior High School. We were interested in getting a School Board to build the Converse School.

Mr. Converse, a banker, was liberal in his donation, giving the bell in honor of his daughter, Fannie, so the school was named for him."

In the controversy, Mrs. Jenkins became interested in Suffrage and the right of women to vote with men.

In 1883 Frances Willard visited Cheyenne, and while she was here Mrs. Jenkins joined the W. C. T. U., and in October of that year, she went to Laramie to assist in organizing the first Territorial Union. The first speech favoring Prohibition ever given in Wyoming was given by Mrs. Jenkins in 1883 and was called "Key."

"There was no means of obtaining charity for anyone in our Pioneer work, for there was no organization upon whom this responsibility rested, and it was often necessary for some of us to go down into the poorest parts of town, take care of sick persons, solicit groceries and clothing from the merchants to take care of the needy, and with no hospital facilities, we were often called upon to attend persons during their last hours of illness and stay with the bereaved family all night, and assist in many other ways. This common interest in the poor cemented friendships which have lasted a lifetime, and the love and friendship between us real 'old timers' are the treasured memories of pioneer days."

After delivering the address called "Keys" Mrs. Jenkins became an ardent supporter of the much defeated clause declaring the right to vote and hold office shall not be abridged on account of sex."

After its approval she was chosen to make the address of presentation of a flag to the Governor from the women of the state, inscribed "To Wyoming from the Women of her State Constitution."

This address was given July 23, 1890. The extract from the address delivered by Mrs. Jenkins July 23rd, at the celebration of Statehood is as follows:



EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY  
MRS. THERESA A. JENKINS

July 23, 1890—At Celebration of Statehood

Copy from: Cheyenne Daily Leader, July 24, 1890

"We have never been compelled to petition or protest; we have never been treated with a patient hearing and our practical suggestions have been most courteously received, and in the future we but desire a continuance of these favors. We ask of our law makers just laws for the perpetuity of our educational facilities; we ask of you laws for the better protection of the moral as well as physical natures of our boys and girls, even though the maverick be neglected, and, taxpayers the burden bearers that we are, may we not expect the proper enforcement of these laws as well as the framing of them. We have, it is true, many lessons to learn and possibly many mistakes to make, but shall we not choose for our instructors those who have our best interests at heart, who seeing the need may plan for the results. We, no doubt, will be advised by many factions, some declaring we are behind in our social and moral reforms, others that we out-speed public sentiment, but the experiment is ours, and with us it will either succeed or fail. Calm discriminations and judicious deliberations are rather to be desired than excitable contests and vain, glorious conquests. The slow rising tide that brings in the boats makes less noise than the rush of waves that retards them."

Mrs. Jenkins campaigned in Colorado and Kansas later, in the attempt to secure equal suffrage. She spoke in many states on this question, and in July 1892 she was elected to attend the Republican National Convention at Minneapolis, which was the first time a woman was thus honored in the nation.

Mrs. Jenkins told me that among the oldest stores in Cheyenne are Bon's Clothing Store and Buechner and Zehner Jewelry Store, now Brendler's. Buechner and Zehner Jewelry Store was the first store in Wyoming to have electricity. Mrs. Jenkins said that people would go in the store and put their hand over the light and as they would not get burned they would all marvel at the marvelous invention. She told me that Cheyenne was the first city in the world to have electricity and electric lights for commercial use.

Mrs. Jenkins said that in the Spring of 1868 Cheyenne began to be called "Hell on Wheels" because of the wildness. In the next few years, Cheyenne began to progress so very swiftly, it was called "Magic City of the West."

Mrs. Jenkins has three children who are Horace Jenkins, Mrs. J. Carl Metcalf, both of Cheyenne, and Mrs. R. G. Jerpe of Roseville, California.

Her daughter, Mrs. Metcalf went to the Cheyenne High School and her class of twenty-seven members was the first to introduce athletics and class plays and dances.

Mrs. Jenkins lived for the past ten years with Mrs. Metcalf, who lives at 2515 House Avenue. Mrs. Metcalf is a very kind woman especially so to her mother Mrs. Jenkins, who had been confined to her home for ten years by a chronic illness.

I had talked to Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Metcalf on Monday, February 24, 1936, Mrs. Jenkins expired at her daughter's home February 28th, so that my interview was the last one Mrs. Jenkins ever granted.

Written by Mrs. Philomena Mohatt  
Cheyenne—1936





## AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A PIONEER WOMAN



Wyoming was a new, strange, wild country as I first knew it in 1878, when I came two thousand miles on my wedding trip to make a home in what was then an almost unknown land. I cannot lay claim the distinction of a pioneer who came into the country in a covered wagon, for we came on the railroad from northern New York, leaving the newly built Union Pacific at Green River Wyoming. After an early breakfast we were ready for our 150 mile ride over the mountains to Camp Stambaugh, where Mr. Hall had a beef contract and had been telegraph operator for five years. From the window of the hotel I watched the stage driver get the coach loaded up for the trip; he piled on mail sacks and express till I wondered if there would be any room for passengers. At last he put in guns after looking at them carefully to see if they were all right. Then he buckled on his cartridge-belt, slipped a revolver into the holster and said he was ready to go.

I didn't say anything, but I thought of a young man we knew who came west as far as Green River and intended to take the stage over the mountains. When he saw the men with their guns, he asked the reason and was told they might be needed, as the Indians were liable to be on the warpath any time. The man from the East said "This is as far as I go!" and bought a return ticket to New York.

We stopped at Alkali Springs for dinner and to change horses. That was my first dinner in the West, with a man for a cook, and I enjoyed it so much. In later years I had many good meals with our cowboys at the chuck-wagon.

Our next stop was at Big Sandy Station. We stayed over one day and took the coach the next night. I thought what a brave woman Mrs. McCoy was to live in such a place with her two little girls, alone most of the time, and always in danger of an Indian raid. I wondered if I could be as brave and what kind of a pioneer woman I was going to make. She was so glad to have us stay. I felt I had found a real friend in the West and our friendship lasted as long as she lived. She gave me a canary bird and for years it was so much company. It always sang of a little log cabin in the mountains and of love and friendship.



When we came to the crossing of Little Sandy, Mr. Hall showed me the place and told again how he rode fifty miles from Stambaugh to repair the telegraph line which had been cut so he could send the message of the Custer Massacre to the outside world when Indian scouts brought the news to the fort. It was the first week in July, 1876.

We reached Stambaugh early in the morning just as the sun shone over the mountains, tired and hungry, but a good breakfast at the hospital where I was to stay made us forget our long night ride. Stambaugh had been a military post for seven years, and was named for Lieutenant Stambaugh who was killed by the Indians near the fort. It was a two-company post—Cavalry and Infantry. Captain Spaulding was the commanding officer at that time. It was abandoned in April, 1878, and the troops moved to Camp Brown in the Wind River Valley. Major Baldwin was the Post trader; his family was the only one at the Fort, as none of the officers had their wives with them. My month at Stambaugh seemed a long one as I was alone part of the time, but I found friends at the old mining camp at Miner's Delight who welcomed me to their homes, and they did not seem like strangers as they were from the East: Mr. and Mrs. Shedd from Vermont and Captain Nickerson and his wife from Ohio. They told me of their first years in that new country, of the hardships and dangers they encountered. But they were still alive to tell the story, and that made things look brighter for I had found friends who proved true and loyal as long as they lived.

The morning I left Stambaugh it was snowing and blowing a regular blizzard. As we drove down the mountain the storm grew less, and as we came into the valley, the sun was shining, the hills were green and wild flowers were everywhere. I was the only passenger on the coach and the driver entertained me with western stories. As we came down the hill from Miner's Delight, he showed me the place where Mike Heenan was killed by the Indians as he was going home with a load of hay, and he told me of the two women who were murdered in Lander by the Indians a few years before and of Dr. Irwin's son who was shot from ambush as he was going home to Miner's Delight. It was all very interesting but it made me feel a little dewy around the eyes.

I was to stay with the Werlin family at Eagle Ranch while Mr. Hall was on the roundup. While I was there I

had my first Indian scare. It proved to be a false alarm, but it was the real thing while it lasted. There was only one man at the ranch and a freighter who camped there for the night. In the forenoon we saw Indians riding back and forth over the hills; they seemed to be pointing to the ranches in the valley. Then we heard the squaws chanting their wild, weird death-song. The men decided that an Indian had been killed by some white man and the Indians planned to make a raid on the settlers. All we could do was to watch and wait. They gave me a little gun that some tenderfoot had brought from the East and told me to put the cartridges in my apron pocket. I have no idea what they thought I would do with them. Mrs. Werlin watched the other window. How long we stood there I do not know—it seemed ages—and all the time listening to that awful moaning and groaning of the squaws over the hill. At last we saw two Indians leave the others and ride rapidly towards the ranch. We waited in breathless silence for the end that seemed so near. When they reached the house the men went to the door, leaving their guns in the house, and asked them what they wanted. In broken English and by signs they said they were friendly Indians from the Ute Reservation on their way to visit the Shoshones—that two of the Indians had quarreled, one was killed and the other one escaped, and they were looking for him. The reaction was worse than the suspense. When they said they were heap hungry, they were given the best of everything.

I had been told that Lander was a fine western town and I was sure to like it. The first view of the city as I came over the hill was a few log and adobe houses on each side of Main Street—less than thirty in all. There was a Post Office, two stores, three or four saloons and the Cottage Hotel which was kept by Mrs. P. P. Dickinson. There was a brewery and an old log building with a dirt roof used as a school house. No trees anywhere except on the banks of the river, no churches, no ministers, no doctors; the only one was the army doctor at Camp Brown. In those days people did not have as many complicated diseases. A newcomer to the country often had an attack of mountain fever; the remedy was go to bed, drink sagebrush tea—a sure cure and no doctor's bill.

There were about half a dozen ranches outside of Main Street, but there was no farming at that time. Uncle Jimmy



Chambers had a little garden just out of Lander. Sometimes he brought a few vegetables around in a hand cart; when he had new potatoes you could have them at ten cents a pound. We lived almost entirely out of tin cans, and had little variety of food, but we lived through it as we knew nothing about vitamins or balanced rations. Kerosene was a dollar a gallon and coffee and tea a dollar a pound, but no one stood in the breadline. Everything was freighted in over the mountain and it was a busy time for freighters from early in the spring till late in the fall. Often you would see heavily loaded freight wagons pull into the street to unload their freight; the drivers would take the yokes from the oxen, pile them up as they took them off and turn the oxen loose in the street to find their way to the river for water and out into the hills to graze. In 1879 the Government issued wagons and harnesses to the Indians and tried the experiment of having them bring in their own freight from the railroad. These Indians' ponies had never seen a harness and I doubt if the Indians had, but they managed in some way to get four horses hitched to a wagon and it took the whole outfit—wagon boss, Indians and squaws—by pushing, whipping and pulling to get one empty wagon at a time up the first hill out of Lander.

Amoretti had quite a stock of ladies' plush hats—all colors, trimmed with feathers and plumes. The Indians bought them all and wore them on their first trip to the railroad. It was a funny sight and long to be remembered.

I was told when I came here that when Indians were on the war path they built signal fires in the mountains. I used to get up at nights and look up and down the mountains to see if there was a light anywhere, or to listen in the early morning for the howl of the coyote which was the Indian war cry. It took me a long time to get used to seeing blanketed Indians and squaws looking in at window, or coming into the house with stealthy tread, their moccasined feet making no noise until one was startled by the greeting "How!" or "Say, woman!"

In early days we had no roads. There was a Government road from Green River over the mountains through South Pass, Atlantic, Stambaugh and Miner's Delight which was used by freighters, and the stage carried a daily mail to Lander and the military post at Camp Brown. All the other roads in the country were Indian trails that wound in and

out through the hills and at last became wagon roads. Seven years later the Government made a road from Camp Brown to Rawlins and freight was brought in from that place. About that time the stage line was changed from Green River to Rawlins, a distance of one hundred fifty miles.

John Ramsey, E. F. Cheney and R. H. Hall were the first to put cattle on the range, and they fed over these hills and in the valley with the antelope, elk, and deer, and an occasional buffalo.

Mrs. H. G. Nickerson taught the first school in Lander and drew the first public money. The school fund was raised by the sale of mavericks—they were called school ma'ams—that were sold at auction to the highest bidder. I taught the third school in Lander, had forty scholars between the ages of five and sixteen. It was so different from any school I ever taught—an old log building with a dirt roof, a few home made desks and benches on three sides of the room and a table and chair were the only equipment. The books were odds and ends gathered from somewhere; no two books were alike. It was easy to go from a day school to a Sunday school and we had the first one in this part of the country. Christmas, 1878, we gave the first entertainment ever given in Lander. Only a few of the children had seen a tree. Some of the older girls in school collected money to trim the tree and buy presents for the children. So much money was given them that we hardly knew how to spend it all. We trimmed the trees, bought every child and baby a present; then to spend the rest of the money we gave a present to every bachelor in Lander and a bag of candy to each married man. Any one could put on presents for his friends, and the presents on those two trees were worth hundreds of dollars. There were silver-mounted spurs, bridles, riding gloves, jewelry and dozens of silk handkerchiefs a yard square at a cost of six to eight dollars each, the best that could be bought at Amoretti's Store. The entertainment was Madam Jarley's Wax Works, so popular at that time. The Sunday School gave me a silver cake basket which I have kept among my old-time treasures.

When Stambaugh was abandoned Major Baldwin moved his family to Lander and built a modern home, and a better store than he had been using, and they have been landmarks for fifty-seven years. The Baldwin Store of today is the finest one in the city. No one had a better claim to being a real, typical pioneer than Mrs. Noyes Baldwin. If the story of



# HISTORY and ROMANCE



The Indian Paint Brush



of Colonial Dames of Wyoming in 1913



her life could be written, it would be one of thrilling adventure, hardships cheerfully endured and dangers bravely encountered. When I knew her, her days of hardship and danger were in the past. She no longer listened for the Indian war cry, or felt that heart-breaking anxiety for the safety of herself and family, but she loved to talk about those early days, and I have listened by the hour as she told how she followed her husband from one trading post to another, from mining camps to army barracks, always on the out-post of civilization, and always in danger of raids from hostile Indians. She was not western bred, but she possessed those traits of character which made her one of the noblest of pioneer women. It rests with the few pioneers who are left to gather up as best they can from the few reliable sources a record of those hardships and sacrifices, for all too soon will they be beyond the knowledge of the present generation.

That first summer I was here E. Amoretti, Sr., built an adobe store, the best building in Lander, and moved his goods down from South Pass. The old store was a small frame building with two rooms. It was heated by a big box stove and he had a novel way of doing it. The door of the stove was in range of the door of the house. He burnt poles and to save cutting them he put one end of the poles into the stove and shoved them up as fast as they burned out.

There was a wedding in a little cabin with the dirt floor. The bride and groom stood on a buffalo robe. The bride was dressed in white, wore a veil and orange blossoms, white kid slippers and gloves. The groom was dressed in a gray suit and wore one of those lively eight dollar silk handkerchiefs. The Justice-of-the-Peace married them. He stopped the ceremony to have an argument with the groom as to which should have the privilege of putting the ring on the bride's finger. As both claimed the right, the decision was left to the two ladies present. They were married all right—as the Judge said, “By the laws of God and the Territory of Wyoming I pronounce you man and woman.”

Dancing was our only amusement in those early days. We often went forty miles in a lumber wagon, danced and visited all night and sometimes had breakfast before we came home. At first we had our dances at the houses. The rooms were small and if a stove or bedstead was in the way it was taken down and put outdoors with the rest of the furniture.

Winter was our playtime. After the cattle were shipped in the fall there was little for the men to do until time to get ready for the spring roundup. The men had leisure time but not the busy housewife, with so many idle but hungry men to feed, for many of the boys stayed on the ranch waiting for the work in the spring.

As the years went by the country changed rapidly. The lure of the West has always called to men and women who loved adventure and who were attracted by the wonderful resources of the country. Gold was found hidden in the mountains, the hills were vast deposits of coal, and oil, and gas wells were drilled in many parts of the country; ranches were located and soon the sagebrush land gave place to cultivated farms with a network of irrigating ditches in the valleys. In 1883 Mr. Hall took up a homestead on Little Popo Agie eight miles from Lander.

My sister who came the first year I was here and was married in 1882 took up a homestead adjoining ours. There was only one ranch between Lander and us. We were all by ourselves out in the sagebrush, but we enjoyed the free western life and were busy making homes in this new country. Everything was so strange and different from the East.

Was I homesick? Perhaps—but I never saw the time when I would say "Let us go back." I came to stay and I have been here fifty-seven years. We celebrated our golden wedding April 3rd, 1928.

We are still living on the same ranch that was homesteaded in 1883. As the years have come and gone, they have brought many changes. Cultivated ranches with good irrigating ditches and modern homes surrounded by trees and flowers cover the whole valley. Like all farmers we have had our good times and our hard times, but we are still "carrying on," hoping for better days. It is forty-five years since I was East the last time. After my father and mother died, and strangers were living in the old home, I had little desire to go back as nearly all my old friends were gone. The first twelve years I was West I went home three times. The first trip was five years after I came here.

We left the first day of November for a ride of a hundred and fifty miles to the railroad, with one little girl and a ten-weeks-old baby. We had four horses and a lumber wagon, canvas covered. We camped at night, had a stove and tent, and it took us four days to drive to Rawlins. Then we had a two thousand mile ride by railroad to our home in northern New York. It was a long, hard trip, but home was at the end of the journey. Those who ride today in closed cars on paved roads cannot realize the condition of the country in those early days. In 1878 there were only six counties in Wyoming, and Sweetwater County extended from the Union Pacific to the Montana line. Green River, 150 miles away, was the county seat. In 1885 the county was divided and Fremont County was made from the northern portion, with Lander the county seat. In 1890 Wyoming was made a state and one more star was added to our flag. Mr. Hall was elected to the first state legislature and served for more than thirty years in the House and Senate. It was not until 1906 that



we were connected by rail with the outside world, but automobiles have made the greatest change in the country. With them came good roads. One can now go all over Wyoming on highways that spread like a net-work over the country.

When I think back over the years they seem more like dreams than realities. It is hard to realize that I have lived through all these changing scenes, that I have seen the wild western frontier become one of the best states in the Union, unsurpassed for its climate—that the little hamlet with the few log houses has grown into the Lander of today—the most beautiful city of all the Golden West, with a population of nearly 2000. The old log schoolhouse with its dirt roof was just a small foundation stone. Today Lander is proud of her grade schools, her Junior High, Vocational and Teacher's Training School and Agriculture Department. Twenty-seven teachers are employed in the schools and there are over eight hundred students.

The present generation does not realize how much they owe to those brave pioneers who blazed the trail for future generations, changing a vast wilderness into a rich country. "Honor should be theirs as long as history lasts."

The West is noted for its hospitality, but the people who live here today are not like those who were here fifty and sixty years ago. Then it was Longfellow's Acadia, "Neither had they bolts to their doors nor bars to their windows, open were their homes like the hearts of their owners, there the richest were poor and the poorest dwelt in abundance." If I were to live my life over, and walk in the same footsteps, I am afraid I could not have the courage to live over again the hardships of those first few years in a new country. And yet no home I have had since has been, with all its modern improvements, so dear as my first little log cabin with two rooms; no friends are half so dear as the old friends I found in the West, and who have been true and loyal for more than half a century. Only a few are left who came to the Lander Valley fifty and sixty years ago and they are like strangers in a strange land. Everything has changed—even the climate. All the familiar landmarks are gone, nothing is left to remind one of the early days—except the grand old mountains with their snow-capped peaks which are the same yesterday, today and forever.

Written by Amelia S. Hall (Mrs. R. H.)  
Mountain View Ranch, Lander, Wyo.  
1935.

## THE BIOGRAPHY OF A PIONEER



Familiar indeed to Cheyenne and community is the name of Georgia Rees, for her sunny disposition and her ability to see the humorous side of any situation have made her friends legion.

She is talented along several lines, being able to entertain at the piano and, to use her own words, "could sing a bit" when she was younger. Her ability to put her thoughts into rhyme is so well recognized that the reading of an original poem by Mrs. Georgia Rees is a frequent occurrence at informal entertainments.

To the Presbyterian Church and many of its organizations she has been most faithful throughout the fifty-odd years she has lived in Wyoming. One of the church societies in Cheyenne has been given the name "Georgia Rees Circle."

She was born in Fort Madison, Iowa, December 20, 1858, the daughter of Franklin and Harriet (Newman) Chambers. On February 15, 1881, at Zanesville, Ohio, she was married to John Henry Christian Rees. Mr. Rees, a native of Zanesville, was born March 7, 1850. Three sons and two daughters came to bless this union:

John Henry (1212 West 31st Street, Cheyenne), was born December 25, 1881, at Glenwood, Iowa. The remaining four were born at Cheyenne. They are:

Addie Leola (Mrs. C. H. Garwood, deceased), born December 28, 1883.

Annis Evadne (Mrs. W. J. Flintjer, 510 West 25th Street, Cheyenne), born February 24, 1889.

Willis Lamar (1616 South Trenton Ave., Tulsa, Okla.), born September 4, 1896.

Daniel Edgar (316 West Pershing Blvd., Cheyenne), born September 21, 1901.

The mother's ever-ready sense of humor and love of fun, of which characteristics Mr. Rees, too, had his share, have been handed down to all the children. Needless to say, the Rees home is the scene of constant gayety, which frequently takes the form of practical jokes.

Georgia Rees tells the story of her life thus:

"My father was a Mississippi River freighter with Fort Madison, Iowa, as base of operations. I can't remember him for he died when I was eighteen months old. I have two sisters, Susie Sophronia, and Caroline. After Father's death Mother moved to Zaneville, Ohio, and there I grew up.



"When I was about twenty years old one of Zaneville's native sons, who had been in the West for ten years, returned to his home for a visit. He was very handsome, and had seen and done so many interesting things that all the girls were in a flutter of excitement. A gay whirl of parties followed his arrival. I took part in the fun as eagerly as the rest, so much so in fact, that my folks teased me by saying that such an experienced man of the world as John Henry Rees would not be at all interested in me.

"He had gone first to Kansas, then to Texas, and later over the Texas Trail into Colorado and Wyoming with a herd of Texas longhorns. The things he told of doing sounded so daring and difficult, and he seemed so superior to anyone I had ever known that I couldn't believe he meant it when he singled me out and proposed. Remembering the laughing remarks made at home, I thought he was teasing me. However, he convinced me he was not and when he left for Wyoming again we were engaged. Two years later he returned to Zanesville and we were married.

"Mr. Rees was quite handsome, I assure you," she said with evident pride, and produced a picture as proof of her assertion.

"This is how we looked when we started for Wyoming. I was quite proud of myself, too, when that picture was taken for that was a new dress and quite up to the minute in style. It was of black taffeta and fully twenty yards went into the making of it. It was lined throughout and the ruffles were reinforced with buckram to give them extra stiffness. Herringbone held the basque snug and wrinkleless. Little did we then dream that in later years women's dresses would be made from materials as transparent as window curtains and as devoid of fullness as are pillow cases.

"Throughout the trip to Wyoming everything along the line interested me. In contrast to the thick woods and heavy undergrowth of Ohio the vast prairies of Nebraska and Wyoming looked barren and bleak. But I liked the mountains.

"We reached Cheyenne April 1, 1881, and put up at the Dyer Hotel. As soon as a few business arrangements were completed we went to our first home, a cabin on Cottonwood Creek, one hundred and ten miles northwest of Cheyenne. The place was owned by Teschemacher and DeBillier, influential cattlemen of that day, and was what they called a roadranch.

"I soon learned that a roadranch was a sort of hotel, and that meals and lodgings were to be furnished all passersby desiring them. That was bad enough, but imagine my surprise when I found a well-stocked bar in one corner of the

room. Then and there I said the liquor supply must go or I would not stay. Mr. Rees backed me up in this and the bar was moved.

"Not another house was in sight of the place, our nearest neighbors being twelve miles away. That seemed quite near to Mr. Rees and others accustomed to this country, but to me it seemed terribly far. This house, which was my first home in Wyoming, had a dirt floor and a sod roof. There were four large rooms, however, and I soon became engrossed in making it into a real home that there was little time in which to worry about the distance to the nearest neighbors.

"The first Sunday we were there some cowboys rode up and dismounted. They acted as if they intended staying a while so I began planning a suitable meal. Turning toward the flour barrel I stared in frozen horror, for on top of it lay the largest snake I have ever seen.

"I ran to the door but Mr. Rees and the cowboys were not in sight. Then I noticed a six-shooter lying on the table, and grabbing it up, headed back toward the kitchen. Aiming it with both hands, I pulled on the trigger with all my might but nothing happened. All this time the snake lay there quietly, sticking out its tongue at me. With each passing moment that reptile got bigger and bigger, until I would have sworn it was as large around as a dinner plate."

Just then one of her sons joined in the conversation with a sample of Rees humor.

"That sure is a healthy snake," he drawled. "Last time I heard that story it was only as big as a saucer."

Mrs. Rees chuckled at this sally, then continued.

"I discarded the useless six-shooter in favor of a rifle which Mr. Rees kept hanging on the wall in the bedroom, but no better luck came with it. In the first place the thing was so heavy I had difficulty in holding it in a shooting position, and in the second, I couldn't make it work either, though you can be sure I pushed and pulled in all the places I thought I should.

"The snake finally grew tired of the show and started down the side of the barrel, so I dropped the useless gun and ran outside. Mr. Rees and the cowboys were then standing beside the barn. I let out a yell about snakes. The men headed for the house on the run, grabbing branding irons, rocks, or any other weapon handy.

"I'll never forget the way they looked when they saw that snake, nor the tone of voice in which one fellow muttered, 'Shucks, it aint no rattler.'



"Then while I looked on aghast, they shamefacedly filed back into the yard leaving the snake in possession of the kitchen. Mr. Rees painstakingly explained that it was only a bullsnake which wouldn't harm me at all. Besides, he said, it would keep rattlers away and would kill mice. I, however, could not appreciate that point. A rattlesnake that wasn't there did not frighten me half as much as a bullsnake that was, so finally Mr. Rees chased it around and around the room trying to scare it away.

"When I told him about my efforts with the guns he said it was a good thing the big one would not work, for it would have kicked me through the wall most likely."

The picture thus created of Petite Georgie Rees, who topped the scale at one hundred and seven pounds, struggling with a gun as long as she was tall, while the intended victim looked placidly on, raised a laugh in which the whole family joined heartily.

"A short time later," the story was resumed, "I was busy in the kitchen when a soft rustle jerked my startled gaze upward. There was Mr. Snake stretched along the log beam that ran the full length of the room. Remembering past experiences with guns, I dashed into the yard in search of a more suitable weapon and came back armed with a pitchfork. I went into action, but to save my life I couldn't hit that snake. Without apparent haste he slithered along the beam and took refuge in a hole in the corner. He did not disappear entirely, however. His head remained near the edge of the hole.

"Every time I looked in that direction, which was every second or two I assure you, his eyes were fastened on me and his forked tongue darted back and forth. That was adding insult to injury.

"By the time Mr. Rees reached home I had had all I could stand. In no uncertain tones, I said if that reptile remained there I would return to Ohio if I had to walk. Guess Mr. Rees thought I meant it for, with a determined look on his face, he took up the pitchfork and the snake bothered me no more. I now know that bullsnakes have a worthwhile place in the scheme of things, but still think that place is not in my kitchen.

"This roadranch where we lived was on the main trail over which freight from Cheyenne to Fort Fetterman was hauled with ten-mule teams. I distinctly remember the first that passed after we arrived. I thought gypsies were coming. It was more or less a tradition back East that gypsies kidnap persons whenever they so desire. Being alone at the time I stayed well out of sight, but kept an eye on the approaching "gypsies."

"Imagine my surprise when I found all the mules hitched to one wagon and only one man with the outfit. As he neared the house I could hear him whistling a good old methodist hymn and straightaway thought, 'Surely a kidnaper would not be whistling THAT song.' However, he gave such close attention to the house as he drove by that my apprehension played a tug-of-war with my confidence in the Methodist hymn. I'm still wondering which would have won had the teams halted and the man approached the house.

"Later I became quite well acquainted with that driver, for he made regular trips from Cheyenne to Fort Fetterman, and we had many a hearty laugh over the fright he gave me that first trip.

"There were many things of which to be afraid in those early days, and being alone much of the time I spent many an uneasy hour. However, from the very first I was not lonesome. Things were too interesting for that. Fruit, fresh vegetables, and trees were the things I missed most.

"We grew awfully tired of eating biscuits, even if they were good ones, but I had never learned to make loaf bread. Finally I ordered a cake of yeast foam, and after studying the directions carefully, made a batch of bread. Well, you should have seen the stuff. It looked funny and tasted worse. I cried over it and Mr. Rees said he thought we had better stick to biscuits.

"A short time later a round-up crew camped near our place. There were about five thousand head of cattle, lots of horses, and six or seven outfits of men. Never before had I seen any thing to compare with that round-up scene, but what interested me most was their bread.

"Next day when the cook was alone in camp I slipped down to the chuck-wagon to talk over the vexing problem. I watched him carefully and listened to all the directions he gave, then rushed back to the house and tried them out.

"The bread was a decided success. I was the proudest person you can imagine when I served it that night, but not a word did I say about how I had learned to make it. Later Mr. Rees bragged to the round-up cook about it and the cook drawled, 'Sure. I told her how to make it.' So my secret was out.

"The milk house at that place was built across Cottonwood Creek, with a long foot log stretching from the door across the marshy places to dry ground. The creek water flowed through an open trough in the floor where we placed large crocks of milk and butter to keep them cool and fresh.



"Once, while sitting on a tub in the milk house busily churning, I heard a rumbling roar outside. Thinking it was a heavy wagon, I stepped to the door to see in which direction it was headed. If going one way it probably would pass on by, if headed the other, it would stop and spend the night. Such was the custom.

"When I reached the door no wagon was in sight, but the roar was getting louder. Then I saw a regular wall of water coming down the creek. Without losing any time I ran for the bank, and was none too soon at that. From my grandstand seat, as you might say, I saw the milk house lifted bodily and hurled down stream, crashing into trees and rocks as it went. Helplessly I watched while all the nice butter, cream, and milk were being ruined. Tubs, buckets, and churn were tossed about, resembling gay, carefree gypsy craft one instant, and hopeless shipwreck the next.

"Then I remembered something that fairly took my breath. My only tablecloth was in the milk house. Losing the milk and butter was bad enough, but they could be replenished with each milking. Tubs, buckets, and churn were harder to replace, but the loss of that tablecloth was a real calamity.

"A heavy rain had fallen that morning, and judging by the amount of water that came down the Cottonwood, there must have been a cloudburst higher in the hills. After a few hours, when the creek had dropped back to normal, we went along the banks salvaging pans, buckets, and tubs from bushes and drifts. Imagine my surprise and delight when Mr. Rees came in with my tablecloth, which he had found caught high in the branches of a tree quite a distance down the stream.

"In the fall of 1881, Mr. Rees, who was stock inspector for the Union Cattle Company, found it necessary to make a trip to Chicago on business, and I decided to accompany him. The first fifty miles between our home and the railroad at Cheyenne were made in a wagon, and the remaining sixty in a stage coach drawn by four horses.

"One hundred and ten miles today mean only two or three hours of travel in a comfortable automobile over floor-like roads, but in 1881, it was an entirely different story. Those fifty miles in the wagon, made in one day, represented rough, tiresome and dusty traveling at a steady grinding pace, from long before sunup until late at night. But at that, they were made in more comfort than the remaining sixty covered the next day by stage, which we caught at Bordeaux.

"The horses, urged by whip and shouted commands, covered every mile of the trail at a break-neck speed while the stage swayed, rocked, and bounced. Dust, raised by the horses' feet, swirled around us as we struggled to keep our hats on, and ourselves in our allotted portions of the seat. If a bend in the road or a chuck hole under a wheel threw us

in a heap in one corner, before we could right ourselves another rut heaved us out of that huddle and into another. I certainly was glad to reach a hotel in Cheyenne, and grateful for one good night of rest before boarding a Union Pacific train for Chicago.

"After the train left Cheyenne I became ill, and at Glenwood, Iowa, I left the train to stay with a cousin until Mr. Rees' return. Even then I was unable to accompany him to Cheyenne, so we both remained with my cousin. That is why our first child was born away from Wyoming.

"The baby arrived on Christmas Day, but it was April before we could return to Cheyenne. First Mr. Rees became ill, then the baby took pneumonia and came so near death I overheard my cousin giving orders about cleaning the parlor so we could lay out the boy there. However, we did not need the parlor for that sad rite, for the baby recovered and is still living (1938).

"On again reaching Cheyenne we bought a place at 209 East 19th Street and made our home there. Later we traded that place for one at 1922 Maxwell Ave., and occupied it for thirty-nine years.

"In 1886, we bought two thousand two hundred and sixty acres six miles west of Cheyenne on the Lincoln Highway, and raised blooded horses. Our brand was a JS on the left shoulder. A race track was laid out and some amateur racing done there. Later the ranch was stocked with cattle and the brand changed to YS on the jaw of horses and Y3 on the left ribs of cattle.

"We made the ranch our home during the summers, but returned to the house in town when school started in the fall. The children enjoyed those vacation weeks and spent the time much as all ranch children do, fishing, hunting, and tearing around the country on horses. I enjoyed them, too, but they were busy weeks for me, especially during haying seasons. This ranch is still in the possession of the family.

"In 1924, we moved to this place, 1212 West 31st Street. Mr. Rees died about three years later, January 12, 1927, and is interred in Lakeview Cemetery. For several years before his death he was court crier in the U. S. District Court here. Judge T. Blake Kennedy wrote a beautiful tribute to him, which is recorded in the permanent court records.

"Until the World War my life had moved along more or less smoothly. Willis did not wait for the draft. He enlisted, and was assigned to the 148th Wyoming Infantry Band. War news was on every tongue, but it is only natural that our own joys and sorrows loom larger than those which do not directly touch us, and that is how the "War Council" originated.



"The War Council is what we four mothers—Mrs. Charles Gage, Mrs. John Smith, Mrs. Garrett, and I—called the times we met to read aloud the latest letters from our boys at the Front. We each had one son over there. Needless to say, our conversations were freely punctuated with tears for we cried singly and in unison.

"Willis went through the fighting safely and came home to tell us of many terrifying experiences. I remarked then that I never would have consented for him to enlist except that I thought he would be safe enough since he was going as a member of the band. Whereupon he retorted, 'Did you think I was going all the way to France just to toot a horn?'

"Almost as soon as he returned what should he do but buy a motorcycle and go tearing around the country at a pace that kept me in a state of apprehension. He was so proud of it I hated to scold too much, and when he insisted on giving each member of the family a ride on it I took my turn meekly enough. Once was plenty, however.'

Here one of the tall Rees sons spoke. "Mother is finicky about some things. Take that cart ride that we all planned so carefully, and which Mother didn't appreciate as she should."

Mrs. Rees joined in the laugh that followed this announcement.

"We were living on the ranch at the time," he continued, "and Mother was expected home from a visit. We thought the occasion called for something extra in the way of celebration for we sure were getting tired of our own cooking. So we hitched up the best cart on the place and Dad drove to the station to meet her."

"With a perfectly good car in the garage," put in Mrs. Rees at this point, "he met me with that rickety old cart and a set of rotten harness."

"Of course, Dad couldn't help it when the horse took to the ditch in such an all-fired hurry," there was a whimsical note in the son's voice. "Even then things would have been all right, only the harness broke. Well, Dad and the horse came out of the ditch but the cart didn't. Looking back he saw the shafts tilted downward and Mother sitting in the bottom of the cart with her chin over the dashboard."

"I thought things had gone far enough," said Mrs. Rees while the rest looked on with widening grins, "so I got out and started to walk home. Mr. Rees soon overtook me and called out as politely as you please, 'Won't you get in and ride?' I should have known better but I got in."

Here the son again took up the story.

"So far the reception committee couldn't boast of its success, but Dad was still trying. When he reached home he swung the cart in a circle, then backed it toward the door. He thought it would be impolite to stop away out in the yard. But in some way he hit the porch too hard and Mother bounced out of the cart and landed in the midst of the reception committee."

By this time the narrator was having difficulty in keeping his voice under control.

"And was Mother mad! Nothing seemed to please her," he sighed dolefully. "She marched off to her room in a great huff, and Dad mournfully announced, 'It's no use, boys. We've got to cook our own supper.'"

The story ended midst a general shout of laughter.

It is this sense of fun and good fellowship, the keynote of the Rees household, which has kept Georgia Rees the center of such staunch friendships as are hers today, and has made her even more than a mother to her children throughout a half century.

Written by Nora Dunn (Mrs. R. L.)  
Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1938.



## LEGAL TENDER



(By Georgia Rees)

I've traveled about a bit in my time,  
Many trials I can't remember,  
But the worst experience I ever had  
Was when I earned this legal tender.

My husband, he came in from work  
Quite seriously ill one day,  
"And," says he, "if you'll milk the cow,  
One dollar I will pay."

So I picked up the old milk pail  
And went out to the barn,  
Never dreaming for one minute  
I would come to any harm.

By the cow I sat down quietly  
And spoke pleasantly to her,  
For fear, in an unguarded moment,  
Her displeasure I might incur.

Then all of a sudden,  
I never could tell how,  
I found myself at least ten feet  
On the other side of the cow.

Well, all of this commotion  
Made quite a din and clatter,  
John Henry came a-runnin' out  
To see what was the matter

He said, said he, "What's happened now?  
I thought I heard you holler."  
I answered, "Don't care if you did,  
I think I've earned that dollar."

## A TRIP TO THE LEGISLATURE

★ ★ ★

(By Georgia Rees)

I had an experience 'tother day  
I never had before,  
Although I've lived in old Cheyenne  
For fifty years or more.  
Up to the Capitol Building  
I wended my way  
To learn just what those learned men,  
Our solons, had to say.

They all wanted to move the chairman,  
But his mind they could not alter.  
He was as steadfast and immovable  
As the old Rock of Gibraltar.  
They were a lot of johnny-jump-ups  
A-risin' in their seats.  
You'd have to be an athlete  
To get a chance to speak.

Then there was Bill Somebody,  
I could not learn his name,  
But then it made no difference;  
They'd have treated him just the same.  
I felt so very sorry  
For the poor old soul,  
Since they knew not what else to do  
He was sent to Committee on the Whole

A word from him I have not heard  
Since they sent him there.  
I suppose they hung him or  
Sent him to the electric chair.  
I used to think to make our laws  
Took men smart by nature,  
But now I think most any fool  
Can get in the Legislature.



## MONEY FOR THE LADIES' AID

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(By Georgia Rees)

The Presbyterian Ladies' Aid  
Is an order firm and strong,  
And can always be relied upon  
To help the Church along.  
We can always money make  
If once we get the notion,  
But every time we get a stake  
Somebody makes a motion  
That we take all our money,  
Both weekly and annual fees,  
And turn it over promiscuously  
To the Board of Church Trustees.

Now this board is composed of men  
Who claim to be self-made,  
But every time they get in debt  
They call on the Ladies' Aid.  
Well, something extra had to be done  
Our Church expenses to defray,  
So one dollar each we were asked to earn,  
And it seemed the easier way  
Than to bake, and brew, and fry, and stew  
A supper to get up,  
Then come and pay a quarter, too,  
To help to eat it up.

So we asked every woman in the Church  
So none could take offense,  
And now I'll tell you what I did  
To earn my hundred cents.  
My husband said to me one day,  
That things to a pretty pass had come,  
When the buttons on his overcoat  
Had dwindled down to one.  
I quickly told him of our scheme,  
But he took it all in jest.  
"Then," says I, "with the buttons on,  
I guess you'll do the rest."

He never answered me one word,  
But silence gives consent,  
So I went to work with all my might  
And on the buttons went.  
When he put on that overcoat,  
And then turned up the collar,  
He experienced such a delightful change,  
That he gave me a silver dollar.  
"Here it is, now make it go  
Just as far as you can,  
For if I try that scheme again  
'Twill be on some other man."

## MRS. ALICE RHUBOTTOM JOHNSON



On June 9, 1887 we left St. Vrain, Colorado, and started with two teams as emigrants for the Oregon Country.

The day was lovely, and many friends bade us "God-speed." We went north, thru a newly settled country along the Thompson River and Cache Poudre. There were no towns of any size after we left Longmont, then just a small town, no railroads, no farming country only cattle ranches. No water only the streams that went nearly dry in summer except the Cache Poudre, a pretty stream. Ft. Collins in the distance was only a small place, at a Fort of sod, it was an Indian defense. Soon after crossing the river, we turned into the mountains. At Virginia Dale, an Indian trail, lonely road but beautiful scenery, came down out of the mountains at Tie Station on the Pacific railroad in Wyoming. All went well until we reached Ft. Laramie, Wyo., there we were halted to wait for a long emigrant train coming from the East, as the Indians were along the road and making trouble to the emigrants. We had been alone us two families of four teams, until we reached Ft. Laramie. Oh how strange everything looked quite a few United States soldiers, a good many emigrants waiting for the train caravan coming, a good many Indians, but friendly. The soldiers in Barracks with guns and cannon made one think there might be danger—but all was quiet there.

After three days of waiting, getting in a supply of rations and repacking for the long "Trail," a shout went up from the soldiers and all the rest, "They are coming," and sure enough a long dark looking line in a cloud of dust were coming slow but sure. Men riding horseback gave orders about camping and reloading. There were 75 teams beside the Riders.

All was confusion and lively. They were all horse teams and many loose horses in case of an emergency.

Next day, the Road Officers, went over the line and put every one in their place, each State in their own Company, there were small companies of two to six teams in some states, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado and some others, I've forgotten.

After they had rested for two days and everything in line, the soldiers fired a goodbye salute, as no one knew who would live to get thru as they had the Mormons to contend with and several tribes of warlike Indians. We were all under orders of several captains of the whole line and whatever he said had to be obeyed.



There were men sent on ahead to find camping places and water and if anything went wrong to report. A good many did get so cross and tired they had to be "called down." They averaged about 25 miles a day when the roads were good and 12 or 15 over mountain roads. We often had to tie a tree to the back of wagons as the hills were so steep, and double up with the teams to cross rivers forded—or on steep banks.

We got along very well until we reached Bear River. We rested from Friday until Monday, as the feed was good for teams, but the Captain gave orders to be careful and not to offend the Mormons, as they were in with the Bannock and Shoshoni Indians. They were ugly, half naked Indians and would never hesitate to do what the Mormons told them to do.

When we got ready to go about 60 teams went on ahead leaving about 40 teams to follow. We were with them and as a crowd refused to pay the toll of \$1.00 across a small stream and some tore down the fences the Mormons had built up to the bridge. The stream was small but deep in the middle but we got across and offended the Captain and he said, "Look out for trouble," as the Mormons would get the Indians after us. We did not believe it but about 4 o'clock we were comfortably camped along Bear River when the cry of Indians caused everyone to take notice. Men were ordered out to save their horses, as they had just got them staked out for the night. The road above us and the hillside was alive with Indians and their ponies. Some of them came into camp and carried all the provisions away that they could, while the men were trying to save the horses. The Captain was so angry with us and gave us all the blame as I suppose we deserved it, but after a little skirmish the Indians all left in a hurry. The Captain said they would be back at daylight.

Provisions were divided so we all had a bite, but no sleep for any one that night, and just at break of daylight, we silently as possible left the camp without breakfast.

We had no further trouble but about 10 o'clock we passed a large pile of half burned emigrant wagons and dead horses and mules. They had been dead several days but we hurried on to reach Paradise Valley about noon.

It was now August and the weather very warm. We reached Snake River in Idaho and found a new ferry and the

Ferryman said if we would cross his ferry he would take us across free.

Our train was now only about 40 teams as the main line turned south to the railroad after the Indian scare.

The Ferryman sent a guide with us along the Snake River on the North side, but oh such a road, all sand over lava rocks and so hot many had to kill their dogs or put them in the wagons. There was no water and we were told to get thru as soon as we could.

Our horses suffered for water and the hot sand had taken the flesh from their legs to their knees. We were so discouraged we were nearly desperate but after the third day our guide barbecued a beef and we all felt better.

The next day we were in Sweet Home Valley and we had to rest the horses for four days and doctor them.

We soon reached Boise, a new town on the River. After that we got along well crossing Snake River below Weiser, then the Blue Mountains down the John Day River, crossed the DesChutes River and the Cascade Divide near Mt. Jefferson, going down Sweet Home Valley to the Willamette Valley to Sister May's home at Butterfield, Oregon. Cora was born six weeks after getting settled (Nov. 4).

This is an exact copy of her diary  
Submitted by Mrs. Roger Rochford,  
Sheridan, Wyoming.





























